A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, August 10. 1708.

I Cannot help putting this Age in Mind of the Injury they do themselves, by their constant misrepresenting Things to themselves; and tho' we have daily instances of it, 'tis to no Purpose to talk of it to them; How melancholly are we all now upon the Subject of *Tortosa*, the Taking of *Tortosa*? And whence comes the Chagrin of this Affair, but from the horrid Cheats put upon us every Day in our publick Prints, in their relating the Affairs of that Country? —— It cannot but be fresh in every Body's Memory, how that upon the first Opening the Campaign on that side, we blustred in all our Prints, that the *French* were disappointed in their Designs, that the Duke of *Orleans* could bring but 16000 Men into the Field, instead of 35000 which he was to have; that the D. *De Noailles* could bring but 7000 Men, instead of 14000 which he was to have; that the Want of Money had defeated all their Designs, that their Troops could not march, that they had no Artillery, and that the Taking of the Fleet of *Tarranes* loaden with Provisions, &c. had quite ruin'd all their Measures, for that they could by no Means subsist in the Country; that Provisions were so scarce, the Army could not march, and that there was not Corn in the whole Country to maintain the People —— That they must be oblig'd to send for their Artillery and Ammunition quite from *Biscay* and *Navarre*, and for their Provisions over the Mountains quite into *France*, which would be long a coming.

Upon these Chimera's, one Paper tells us, the Duke of *Orleans* had given over all Thoughts of a Siege; another from *Barcelona*, that they were now in no Manner of Pain for *Tortosa* —— Another, that Count *Staremberg* being arriv'd, the Army was drawing together to act offensively; another, or the same at another Time, that it was not doubted now, but the *French* would be driven from their new Conquests, and a thousand Rhodomontades of this Kind.

One reckoning up the Forces on every side, tells us, first the Duke of *Orleans* cannot march for Want of Money, that he finds himself so out in his Accounts, that all the Troops he can bring into the Field will not be 16000 Men, and those for Want of all Necessaries; that the Duke *De Noailles* is in no Condition to act, that nothing is to be fear'd from that side having not 7000 Men in his Army; but when he comes to King *Charles*'s Army, that is in a fine Posture, his Infantry is 18000, his Cavalry 4000 of regular Troops, besides the Miqueletts, who are called very considerable, and that he is drawing into the Field to face the Enemy.

Now, Gentlemen, having seen all these fine Accounts, and accordingly believing them, we set our Hearts at Rest about *Catalognia*, we apprehended no Danger there; if the *French* gave us any Accounts of their Progress and Marches, we thought it all Bluster and Show, and that it was spread abroad only to raise the Spirits of their Men, that there was nothing in it, but all was well.

At length Things come to Action; and the first Thing we meet with is, that be it never so long a March over the Mountains, for the Cannon and Ammunition to be brought quite over Land from *Biscay*, yet that it is come up in Time, that whether the *French* have Money or Provisions or no, yet they march—The Army of King *Charles* which was to act offensively is not heard of, no not one Word of it—No Troops are posted in such Passes of the Mountains, where 2000 Men have kept out 20000; nay, the very *French* themselves are surpriz'd to find the Confederates abandon such Advantages—— And thus the Siege of *Tortosa* is form'd.

Well, all the while the Siege lasts, our News-Men again tell us, the *French* make no Progress, the Ground is so rocky, they cannot carry on their Approaches; nay, one tells us, it is so rotten, they cannot make their Approaches, Rocky or Rotten is alike to them, just as one of our Learned Writers the other Day call'd a *Danish* Colonel, a *Den*.

At last the Town, with a Garrison of near 4000 regular Troops, besides as they told us, 6000 Miqueletts and Inhabitants, is surrendred, and if our Accounts, *at least what we have hitherto seen*, are true, we have not much to boast of the Defence they made all this while; the Army of King *Charles*, which was to act offensively, is looking on and can do nothing—And now we are chagrin and melancholly for the Taking of *Tortosa*——Really, Gentlemen, if you had begun right, you would have compounded with the *French* for *Tortosa*, and I dare say the *French* are much more disappointed than you, that they have gone no farther; if we consider the Circumstances of King of *Charles* at the Beginning of the Year, it was very much the *French* had not by this Time beaten them to the Gates of *Barcelona*, and if King *Charles* receives the *German* Troops now coming with the Queen of *Spain*, perhaps the *French* may receive some Checque in their Progress.

As to the Army of King *Charles*, I'll allow, the full Tale they have given us, *Viz.* That King *Charles* had 18000 Foot and 4000 Horse, but they never told us, how many of these King *Charles* could draw into the Field, and how many it would be necessary to place in the Frontier Towns; and let the Gentlemen but discount 4000 in Garrison in *Tortosa*, 2000 in *Gironne*, and 2500 in *Terragona*, and 3000 Foot and 2000 Horse with the Prince of *Hesse*, facing the Duke of *Noailles*, and 1000 with the King in *Barcelona*, with about 2000 in other petty Garrisons, which is too few; reckon but these, and it can be no Wonder, that Count *Starembergh* did not attempt to disturb the *French* in the Siege of *Tortosa*; and as to the Defence of the Place, I perswade

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my self, they were order'd not to hold out so long as to be made Prisoners, but rather to yield the Town, and save the Troops for a Time of Action in the Field.

But thus you may see, how we suffer our selves to be amus'd with senseless and foolish Reports of Things, and then when we have flatter'd our selves into an effectual Cheat, we grow chagrin at our Misfortune, and cry out of our Disappointment.

And just thus we act in the Case of the late Victory, while our Passions will not wait upon our Reason; had we but a suitable Talent of Patience, Things would come out in their Course, to our better and more compleat Satisfaction.

MISCELLANEA.

I Have not troubled you of late with any of the Affairs of *Scotland*, I know your Time is so taken up with News from abroad, with hearing of Victories, *believing them up* to twice as big as they really are, and then *believing them down* to nothing at all, that you have no Leisure to look at home, and see how your own Affairs go; and now, Gentlemen of the *High Church*, that love to have something to complain of, that are ever seeking and finding, or making some Occasion against your Neighbours, how come you have not condoled with your Brethren in the *North*, that have been in some Trouble lately about what they call here Matters of Religion.

I think the best, and indeed the only Service that can be done by Authors and Writers of *Reviews* and *Observators*, or any other Paper that passes Judgment upon publick Affairs, *for I make no Distinctions*, is to set the Affairs of the World, whether Foreign or Domestick, in a true Light, and to give Mankind a clear View of them without Partiality, Prejudice, Passion or Prepossession; so far as any of us, shall not at all except my self, deviate from this Rule, so far we break in upon our proper Business, and do Harm rather than Good — I shall say no more of my self than this, that it really is my Desire and whole Design to do thus in these Papers, and in every thing I write; and as I am perfectly disinterested in either side, after all that Clamour and Raillery has suggested, as I get nothing of them, nor ask nothing from them on either side, I think my self the freer and the better qualified to speak impartially — Having nothing to fear or hope for from any Thing, Person or Party under Heaven.

I know, I have before me a Case of some Nicety, and the Distinctions on the Subject must be very nice, since not to do Injury on one hand or other, and yet give the Age an impartial Account of an Affair that goes so near to the very Edge of two differing Interests, is not the easiest Thing in the World.

In order therefore to state the Case before me as unexceptionably as I can, I shall give a short Abridgment of it here, and in my next you shall have perhaps an exact History of Fact, as the Story will come in.

I need not premise that I expect a great Deal of Noise and Clamour at the very Story in general, and indeed it is to let the World judge of that Noise and Clamour, and to make the World, if possible, capable of judging for themselves, that I make this Attempt; in which I shall neither regard nor reply to the Cavils and Quarrels of Objectors, at least till I have gone thro' the Relation, which I shall do as concisely as I can.

When the Revolution in *Scotland* after the Model of that in *England* had taken Place as to the Affair of Civil Government, and King *William* was plac'd on the abdicated Throne of that Kingdom, there appear'd this Difference only between the Revolution in either Nation, *Viz.* That in *Scotland* they behoved to have an Ecclesiastick as well as Civil Revolution——— The Kirk of *Scotland* had originally reform'd into Presbyterianism, *which by the way tho' some cavil at, I think, is sufficiently prov'd,*